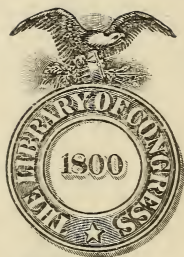


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OUR  
LAY OFFICE-BEARERS



G.F. OLIVER



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OUR  
LAY OFFICE-BEARERS

BY  
REV. G. F. OLIVER D. D.

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“MOREOVER thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.” (Jethro’s counsel to Moses, Exodus xviii, 21, 22.)





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# OUR LAY OFFICE-BEARERS.

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## I. THEIR CALLING.

---

THE unsalaried officers of the Church are providentially called. There could be no organized effort without them; **Responsibility from Above.** hence they are a necessary factor in Church life. The duties imposed upon them consume but a fraction of their time. Nevertheless, the voice of the Church is the call of God. Once elected, and the office accepted, the obligation of official laymen is relatively as sacred as that of the ministry. The responsibility of officials elected or appointed over the visible business of the

Church is as truly from above as if they were formally consecrated by laying on of hands and prayer. In the apostolic era laymen were chosen to attend to "this business." Hands were laid upon them, and they became deacons. They were related to the apostolic ministry somewhat as the Levites and their graded assistants in the Jewish temple to the priesthood. The apostles were called to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Acts vi, 1-4.) But while they were thus called to an undivided ministry, Stephen and his six associate deacons, "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," were as really and divinely called to their share of sacrifice and service. In a valuable sense this is true of Church officers to-day, and this despite errors in their selection and even unfitness for their work.

If God calls ministers to give their whole time exclusively to spiritual labors, he calls the rest of the Church to provide for their support and sustenance. This he secures through the organization of the laity. There are, of course, peculiar elements in the call to the ministry, or priesthood, which none can dispute; yet there is also a solemn, a special and divine weight of responsibility upon the laity in office. They are the leaders of the people, and sustain a vital relation to the body of the Church. Because their service is partial and occasional, it is none the less important and sacred. Nor is it less because no salary attaches to the office. Conscience, not money, ought to make men faithful, prompt, **Conscience** and honest. Why should not **versus** **Money.** the steward or leader be as reliable for the **work** of visiting the members of his class as

## 10      OUR LAY OFFICE-BEARERS.

the assessor the citizens of his voting precinct? Why should not a trustee of church property make his stated report and interest himself in degree as reliably as a county treasurer or commissioner? Why should not a Sunday-school teacher appear as regularly and promptly in her place for Jesus' sake as the day-school teacher who is paid for it? Shall covetousness outdo conscience? Is the love of money stronger to draw or drive than the love of souls? Do not the frequent neglect of official Church meetings, and the carelessness in managing Church business justify this severe inference?

We fear that a slumbering or seared conscience is the cause of habitual disregard of duty by those elected to places of trust in the Church. If so, we should prayerfully

awake, or radically modify our plan of Church government.

Whether trustees of property, or guardians of character, officials and teachers in the Church owe it to themselves and their brethren to be as faithful at least as hirelings. If not, it is a question whether they should expect continuance in office. When employees shirk or slight their appointments, they justly expect rebuke or discharge. Indeed, there is no reason to demand greater fidelity on the part of pastors and missionaries wholly employed in Christian work, than of those who voluntarily accept a partial service as officers or occasional teachers. Temple service, **Ungrudging Fidelity Demanded.** whether it pertains to the dust-cloth, the collection baskets, or the choir-books, is all a holy calling. It is no more

to be indifferently performed than any public trust where bonds or vows are legally demanded as a surety for good behavior and fidelity. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently," is the awful thunderbolt of God against careless official workers in his vineyard. If the pew shall demand fidelity in the pulpit and pastorate, shall not the same standard of faithfulness be required on the part of the laity in all our unsalaried but honored officers of the Church? God justly asks at our hands a holy and ungrudging service. It pays well to give it, for "His reward is with him, and his recompense before him."

Our works are our offerings, and bear the same relation to religion as Jewish sacrifices did under the old dispensation. To despise or underrate our calling to official duty is to despise Christ the Head of the Church.



This is indeed a serious if not fatal offense. "And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye <sup>God's</sup> <sup>Opinion of</sup> <sup>Carelessness</sup> say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. . . . Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame and sick. . . . Should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord." (Malachi i, 7-13.)

Herein we see the divine estimate of those having custody of official duty in the Church who minify the duty of temple drudgery;

who weary in the thankless tasks of taking collections, gathering money, or repairing the sanctuary. The Lord grieves over and **A Lame and Dishonoring Service.** rebukes those who are forever lame or behindhand in their work for God and his Church; who in politics or business are prompt, enterprising, and trustworthy, but who leave Church matters to the last, or lamely perform their tasks in a heartless way, which shows how secondary Christ's business stands in their thought. Whether "stewards of the mysteries of God," or stewards of Church funds, "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

One of the most successful farmers we have known attributed his success to the habit of giving his own affairs first place. He was obliging to his neighbors and visitors; but his own crops must first be looked

after before he would accommodate others. This is the universal policy of success in the world. In the Kingdom of Christ, He must have the pre-eminence in all things. The Church's welfare is Christ's chief **The Lord's Business First.** concern. It is well to trust in God; but he should be able to trust us a little—"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

## II. THEIR CHARACTER.

---

GRANTING that some are divinely called to be officers in the Church, we may well assume that they are to be qualified for the positions they fill. Laymen are called to semi-spiritual burdens of the temple service. It should not, however, be inferred that a semi-religious or secular grade of character will suffice. This business of the Church demands as upright and devout men as the ministry. It seems almost assumed in our Discipline that, while stewards are to be chosen because men of "solid piety," trustees and other officials, or teachers, may be men of doubtful or average godliness.

This is not God's thought, nor apostolic precedent. For we read in Acts (chapter vi) that "in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the Twelve called the multitude, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." Accordingly they chose Stephen and his six associates. This was the first "Official Board" of the Christian Church. Splendid samples and models they are. Very similar in pattern to these were the men chosen by Moses, at the suggestion of Jethro, to be rulers and

judges over the people. "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself and they shall bear the burden with thee." (Exodus xviii, 21, 22.)

These officials were men of "honest report." They were "well indorsed" by their brethren. They had reliable habits, and were free from warts and excrescences of carelessness or financial looseness. They may have had in mind Ananias, a good enough Church-member, but a poor accountant in reckoning up the price of land. Some are honest in the disbursement of funds who totally disregard their official or personal

**Make the  
Credit of  
the Church  
First-class.**

obligation to pay just claims of minister or missionary. Because the funds do not easily come to hand, excuse is made and payment defaulted. This, too, when heroic giving or diligent collecting would provide ample amounts for all calls. Such a course is too often equivalent to dishonesty, or leads to it. This is the 'ground of the worldling's verdict who sarcastically warns us against the validity of a Church debt. The Church is suffering in business circles because of these habits among officials. With many, "slow pay," "no pay," and "part pay" are equally disgraceful. Indeed, the first is often the cause of the other two. When Church dues are paid as promptly and surely as first-class business firms pay their debts, then will the Church have high-grade credit. Ours is an institution of supreme dignity. Is not Christ greater than Cæsar?

If all were done in the name of our Master, and as he would do it, would not our religious debts be as sacredly honored as taxes for the support of civil government? Is not the gospel ministry worth more to society than civil statutes or officers of the law? The Church official who, by example or consent, suffers the financial obligations of his Church to drop in the market, or be canceled by a passing calendar, thereby permits the Bible and pulpit to be dragged to the same low level of unreliability. Thus is our Christian influence weakened, or destroyed. Hence the need of men of "honest report." Safety as well as sincerity, good ethics as well as great devotion, are essential qualifications for office-holding in the Church of Christ.

The face of the clock should be in harmony with its profession as a correct time-



keeper. For sake of decency and reputation, these surface defects must be overcome. To this end counsel, and even moral surgery, should be welcomed for the destruction of faults which dim the official headlights of our Zion. Happy and honorable that official who courts and welcomes remedies for his inefficiency.

**Fix the  
Clock.**

But "wisdom" must be added to honesty. The use of proper means must be adopted to secure laudable ends. Pentecostal officials were full of wisdom. Some have natural aptitude for bringing things to pass. They know when to begin, and how to proceed. Others are helpless and defective in the discharge of important trusts. Wisdom is both gracious and natural. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," but not the end

**Wisdom  
and Work  
will Win.**

thereof. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way."

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

This quality of character should not only be respected in the selection of officials; it may be increased in those who lack it as certainly as Solomon received wisdom when he sought it unselfishly for the control of his realm.

Procrastination is one path to bankruptcy. Excessive credit and poor collections bring on the same result. The Church demands the wisest business methods to be found. He who would serve the Lord well in official harness must be diligent in business and fervent in spirit. He must pray, and he must hustle. He shall know how

to do who works to win and waits on God. Alas! that the children of the world should be wiser in their generation than the children of light. It need not be so.

The make of a clock is more essential than its appearance. So wisdom, both natural and gracious, should be implored and demanded in those who lead class and direct Church finance. We shall have more sense, and better, when we shall pray more and lift up an available Scripture standard of character for all.

Not less deserving of approval than the foregoing quality is "faith," which also was found in Stephen in its fullness.

A holy conceit and confidence that whatever ought to be done can be done is vital to success. Abounding faith in God makes the trusting toiler enthusiastic at the

**Faith in  
Officials.**

start and patient to the finish. Such officials find a charm in drudgery. They weary not in well-doing. They are clocks which are daily wound up by prayer, as the regulator is set by wire from the observatory, and wound up by a self-winding dynamo in its heart. Such officials are not discouraged and ready to resign in presence of complaint and deficiencies. Difficulties instruct, but never defeat them. Faith in its fullness conquers all. Church officials need it often more than pastors. Indeed unbelief among office-bearers gives a like tone to the pulpit, and causes the pendulum of pastoral action to swing feebly. One or two men of a Church, if surcharged with faith divine, can work out, talk up, and pray down almost miracles of victory. They are an advance guard to all enterprise.

The crowning excellence of our model

official is the "fullness of the Holy Ghost." He may have a measure, but not the fullness of the Spirit. Whether distributing alms or giving Bible instruction, all will be defective, if not destructive, without the unction of pentecostal grace. Its absence will leave the heart weary **Power of the Spirit.** even in success, and unacceptable in presence of empty praise. The power of the Spirit is the mainspring of the soul. This alone insures perpetual motion in the thankless routine of Church business, gives rest from the strife of tongues, and gilds trifles with the glory of immortality.

When shall we see a common standard of piety for pastor and his officials the rule of the Church? Then would "equal **Pentecostal Leaders Succeed.** lay representation" in our governmental assemblies be more consistently urged. But where social prestige or wealth

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are made a substitute for unction, faith, wisdom and honor, we may expect little else than reproach or defeat. The Church will be as weak in her benevolent enterprises as she is worldly in her leadership.

### III. THEIR DUTIES.

---

WE have already seen that the Scriptures require of our Church officials that they be “men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.” **Will help Revivals.** They must be not religious only, but spiritual. If so, they will be interested, first of all, in the spiritual welfare of the Church. Its success on this line will be more their concern than mere financial prosperity. They will, therefore, encourage, both from impulse and necessity, a spiritual ministry, aggressive revivals, and all plans to secure the salvation of souls. They will attend and indorse the revival, and will delight to

see converts growing steadfast and strong. With such men all business meetings will have significance. They will be worth attending because they make for the piety, the standing, and the progress of the whole Church.

The useful layman in office will regularly read his own Church paper. He can not **Will Read** afford not to take it. His **An-Our Literature.** nual Conference Minutes will be found in his home. He will thus keep in warm touch with preachers. He will also gain from all possible sources an intelligent appreciation of the benevolent, educational, and revival events of his day. He will, further, be familiar with the latest edition of his Church Discipline. He will often review its prescribed vows and duties. He will no more ignore its orders than a railroad employee the bulletins from his super-



intendent. As a Methodist, he will value his Bible and hymn-book.

An exemplary official will set such an example in church-going as would not be a reproach if adopted by all the membership. He will not habitually absent himself from evening preaching, nor totally from the Sunday-school, the Epworth League, the prayer or the class meeting. While the Church is organized, he will indorse both the order and the departments of service, though he may have just reason for irregular attendance upon many meetings. His fidelity will waive personal preferences in the interest of all classes. Hence he will respect superior authority, deferring always and agreeably to the legal majority among his brethren. For it is well known that there is one annoyance greater than the official absentee—

An  
Exemplary  
Official.

it is the chronic objector. He is sometimes too valuable to lose, and too troublesome to keep. May his shadow disappear!

There are enough joint duties of our officials to justify loyal attendance upon all

**Official Duties Imperative.** official meetings of our growing Church. This is especially true since much more than formerly is local Church business done by the Official Board and the Quarterly Conference. Each officer should share a part of the care of his colleagues. Trustees owe it to help the stewards, while these in turn should gladly cheer the class-leaders and Sunday-school superintendent. Each department is somewhat dependent on the other.

Particular duties develop in the discussions of these meetings. Those who by neglect or false estimates of the importance of a particular session frequently remain

away, soon form a habit of indifference, and become officially obscured. This is fatal and unfortunate both for the society and the incumbent; for occasional items of business often become vital. Partial action as to bills, repairs, plans, programs, licences, reports, services, etc., become the occasion for dissension or criticism by absentees. Responsibility is unjustly cast upon the few, while both blame and burden are shifted where they do not belong. Natural leaders will be used somewhere. Other organizations than the Church rush in for a share of attention. If the Lord's work is given a second place by neglect, it will soon take the back seat from necessity. Social clamor of other societies will crowd out the Church's claim, and fill us with forgetfulness or with excuses. The good may be the foe of the best. He who makes a Church meeting the

rival or subordinate of other engagements, degrades his Church below the conscience level, and beneath the Scriptural level. Spiritual decline or alienation, alas! follows too soon. The worse conquers the better. The club supplants the prayer-room, and social life tramples the robes of religion.

The common custom of monthly business meetings is a wise one. Even in rural districts there should be such a **Monthly Business Meeting.** meeting for every individual Church. The Quarterly Conference for the whole charge, or circuit, justly claims the presence of every layman honored with official position in Methodism. Even where there is little or no formal business, the official Conference is not unimportant, and should not be so treated. It may wisely be devoted to spiritual fellowship and prayer. It is a council of ways and means. Too

often there is little to do merely because we do nothing and care less. Spending neither valuable thought nor time on Church affairs, is it any wonder that in the congregation things drag on at a shameful pace? If the regular program or disciplinary order calls out nothing, bring up things which do deserve talk and attention. There is much of abiding interest to every Church in town or country. There are ecclesiastical weeds to be pulled, fences to be built, and brush to be burned in every neighborhood. Think of these, and others. The music of the Church, how is it managed? Is the singing lively and attractive? What about hymnals, choir, organ, instruments, etc.? What of current expenses? Are our methods being creditably worked? Who are delinquent, and why? Compare our methods and credit with others. What organiza-

tions, and how improved or dispensed with? What of the Sunday-school, our libraries, young people's societies, entertainments, instruction, etc.? Home and family re-

**Subjects**    ligion, the parsonage, the pastor's  
               **for**  
**Counsel.**    methods and burdens, ushering and entertaining strangers, vacation supply, temperance, the benevolences, licensing young men to preach, discouragements, and how to meet them, coming Conferences, conventions, hospitality, elections, civil problems and local politics, prayer and class meetings, revivals, public complaints, private rumors, etc.? Are not all these worth considering in turn? Any or several of them could be made a theme of valuable discussion by officials of every grade and experience. Nor should counsel about these matters be postponed until some emergency compels us to give them attention.

An official class or prayer meeting would of itself bring large returns, and be no waste. To refer these subjects **Looking After Little Things.** to the pulpit, or to the pastor and his three select and sometimes sleepy disciples, is not a worthy treatment of a cause deserving in all honor our loyal support. Daily cabinet meetings and weekly municipal councils are often the order, especially in war or seasons of special enterprise. Ours is a perpetual warfare. We cry out, "Attention, guards!" to things essential. Trifles involve the destiny of souls, and are greater than they seem. A discouraged heart, a delinquent bill, a false rumor, a thoughtless insult, a careless sexton, a broken window, a foolish fuss, a pastoral blunder, a lazy teacher, may each or all involve a Church in doom or disgrace. "Things which accompany salvation" must



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not and dare not be neglected. Hence no meeting is unimportant. That official who does not see reason for forethought, and sacrifice sufficient to attend his monthly and quarterly meetings, even though he be not chairman or secretary, is scarcely worthy of re-election, to say nothing of promotion.

Perhaps pastors are to blame in minifying these regular business meetings of Official Board and Quarterly Conference. We make them irregular, begin them late, yield them to every social or personal convenience, or so announce them as to beget indifference or disrespect. When the official meetings are made as vital a plan of Church-work as the meetings of a board of directors to a bank, then will our gospel angels shake off much of the dust of dishonor, spread broader wings, and fly with

**The Key to  
Success.**



the speed of conquest. Since the officers lead the whole membership, their fidelity to duty determines the enthusiasm and success of the whole Church army. If weak and occasional in official service, the private soldiers will lag or retreat in private duty. The key of destiny is in our office-bearer's hand.

## IV. THEIR SPECIFIC CARE.

---

THE care of Church property is a sacred trust. The assumption of this office is that

**Trustees:** the “not less than three nor  
**Their Duty.** more than nine” local trustees shall protect and promote the interests of their intrusted property as wisely and carefully as if under bonds, or the personal owners of the realty in trust. If so, the title must be secured according to the Discipline. Records of their proceedings should be preserved, and continuously kept in proper form. The frequent examination of deeds and other book entries should not be overlooked. Insurance policies should be watched as upon our own homes. Mort-

gages should be avoided, or kept within easy reach. Repairs on church and parsonage should be maintained on a par with the better property in the neighborhood. Accordingly, shattered glass, shabby belfry, weather-beaten doors, broken furniture, dangerous flues, or dilapidated fences should awaken talk, and turn every trustee into an exhorter and solicitor. This is not the business of any society in the Church. The trustees legally supervise all funds not included for ministerial support. An annual report of the value and condition of Church property, expenses, etc., is an imperative and interesting duty never to be slighted.

A careless or grouty sexton is a fit subject for rebuke or discharge. Reports to the Quarterly Conference, as well as attendance upon the same, is demanded by every consideration of courtesy and loyalty.

In building churches and improving property their best combined judgment is needed. Credit is capital, and dare not be impaired, either by extravagance or by poor financial methods. All moneys should be invested safely, and the income applied promptly to the purposes designed. In building there are too many burdens thrown upon the ministry by excessive outlay or absurd architecture. Often these blunders are against soul-saving. Bad ventilation, poor altar accommodations, miserable acoustics, etc., are not less worthy of censure than going beyond the "three-fourths" clause in providing for funds necessary to build. Avoid distressing debts. Hence close counsel with pastor and presiding elder is important. But blind transfer to them of delegated rights is as foolish as it is sometimes perilous. It is

**Building  
Churches  
and Avoid-  
ing Debts.**

equally unwise to delegate the care or repair of a part of the church property to some society, the league, or other department of the Church.

A regularly organized Board of Trustees is the first pressing need of most small Churches. For this organization **An Organized Board.** the pastor is chiefly responsible; but every trustee should insist upon it early in the Conference year. The second is a harmony of policy in the interests of the religious welfare of the society. When trustees, under protest of expense or for other reasons, oppose pastor, leaders, or superintendent in forward religious work, or if they permit or thrust into the Church doubtful entertainments, they not only stand in their own light, but deepen the shadows around every other member of the Church.

According to our Discipline, stewards are

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to be men of "solid piety" and of "good, natural, and acquired abilities." Their duties, in brief, are accurately to account,

**Pious and Gifted Stewards.** apply, and report all moneys received for the ministry and the poor; to inquire after the sick or distressed, and to report disorderly persons; to advise with the ministry; to attend official and quarterly meetings; and to furnish the elements for the Lord's Supper.

The simple secret of success on financial lines may be condensed into a few words.

**Duties of Stewards.** They include all Disciplinary plans, but are futile without conscience and push behind them. Make generous estimate of amounts needful and just. Apportion to the membership, with sensible allowance for objections and shrinkage. Notify all concerned, and keep it up. It will rarely suffice to leave it to mere volun-

tary subscriptions. A standard must be set for the average member. The stewards should do it in the light of all facts. Let a minimum amount be named for the poorest, and the rich be gently constrained to give according to their ability. Broaden and enlarge the generosity of the people. Sin will shrivel: you must develop the spirit of giving. Record receipts and expenditures with system and frankness. Persistently collect in person and through envelopes. Let stewards lead in giving, and always say, "We can, and will." Honor your promises regularly; and, with faith in God, the money is sure. Indeed, we need men more than money. Money will come if we can only raise men enough of the right sort to fill our offices. Failure in the steward's primary duty of financier makes him cowardly and ineffi-

**Financial  
Plans.**

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cient in every other department. He will be helpless in giving advice or in aiding the sick. Further, if lazy or heartless in collecting funds, he will be shy of official meetings. Delinquents who postpone or habitually neglect the support of the Church must be visited. Printed notices, charts, public announcements, may all have their place. But a Christian visit by the steward will do more, if wisely made, than all other means of securing needful funds. Personal touch of stewards with the rank and file in our Churches is one of the shortest paths out of many financial embarrassments.

Neat strips of unleavened bread, pure, unfermented wine, appropriate table linen, respectable communion ware, with forethought, and early preparation of the table for love-feast and communion occasions, are points of duty which

**The**  
**Communion**  
**Table.**



every pastor may justly require of his stewards.

Faulty leadership must share the blame for a partial suspension of class-meetings. Formality and multiplied organizations are not the only causes. **Class-Leaders.**

There is time and place yet in most Methodist Churches for an up-to-date class-leader. Many Churches have them, and more might grow them. Intelligent, pentecostal freedom, with hearty pastoral indorsement, will resuscitate the class-meeting, and set it a-going with life and song. Personal holiness and pastoral drill of the class-leaders are necessary to match the times on which we have fallen. The Holy Spirit back of intelligent variety and adaptation can make our old class-meeting fresh and attractive to hungry souls. Let us make a brave, and it need not be a fruitless, fight to rally this

retreating custom. A course in reading has been prepared for class-leaders, and should be adopted and patiently followed up. But it must be supplemented by a course in grace and wisdom. Great-hearted, fully-saved, and Spirit-baptized leaders will entertain and hold their classes if they but love their calling and give themselves to it. They should accept counsel and welcome hints from their members, and every other source. Method is less essential than power, tact, brevity, unction, promptness, faithfulness, and love. Nevertheless, forms and precedents must be honored. The testimony of the saints must be retained. Open lips keep the soul warm.

#### **Superintendents and League Presidents.**

The former are called to promote Scriptural instruction, the latter to advance piety

among the young. The Sunday-school and Epworth League can be revitalized only by fresh energy at the head. Isolation, independence, and a lack of the evangelistic spirit are our perils. These must be soul-winning as well as educational forces. Hence these officers in particular should be leaders and experts in soul-winning. Frequent reports and counsel with committees and officials will unify and enlist the influence of older people in essential lines of work. The Sunday-school and League must be a unit in evangelistic efforts and Bible study. The Sunday-school superintendent and president of the Epworth League are the storage batteries of our young people's machinery. May good ones multiply! The opportunity of Methodism is in the field of youth. Doctrinal intelligence, loyalty, and revival zeal

**Good  
Leadership  
for Our  
Youth.**

may best be promoted here. In no other places should leadership be more carefully guarded. We need harvesters more than seed-sowers to-day. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

A school for Church officers would be a boon indeed. We have an army now; we **Helps for** need drilled captains. Their bur-  
**Church** dens are heavy and discourage-  
**Officers.** ments many. They should have sympathy and prayer, rather than censure. They need kind words and much grace to make them as loyal to a faulty pastor as to a popular one; as faithful under fire as in a tide of progress. The Quarterly Conference which creates these officers should foster, train, and encourage them. The Comforter waits to soothe and bless. Then will his yoke be easy and his burden light

## V. THEIR TRIALS AND REWARD.

---

ALL public servants are subject to severe and frequent trials. The discouragements of unsalaried officials are the **Trials and Persecutions.** greater strain, because nothing but the rewards of a good conscience can atone for the pain of persecution or censure. Politicians may endure insult for promotion or pay, and the business man for profits, but the Church official must keep sweet and polite for the sake of Christ and the brethren. Hence, good nature and a heart full of grace and patience are always in demand.

These trials too often proceed, as in

Stephen's case, from "certain of the synagogue," who were given to dispute. Happy for those who, having his "wisdom and spirit," are able to withstand the wind and tide of misrepresentation! Blessed that officer who can take enough pleasure in his work neither to procrastinate nor neglect his tasks! It is heartbreaking to be misunderstood and censured after sincere and faithful service. But such was Christ's lot. Like a soldier's peril, it is what we bargain

for at the start. It should be  
**Their**  
**Source.** welcomed, rather than bemoaned.  
"If," says Peter, "when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God."

Of Stephen, our first martyr and model layman, it is written that he did "great wonders and miracles among the people." But when we study the records we find no

miracles, though the wonders meet us at every look. It is a wonder to see the "spirit and wisdom" with which, in temple and street, he meets the murmurings and disputes of the populace. It is a wonder to behold him in the council, before false witnesses, looking "like an angel." He must have felt like one in his soul. He had the mind of Christ. It is no easy work to silence the poor, the bitter Pharisee, and the blind fault-finder. Stephen, with his soul full of kindness, and his lips dripping with Scripture truth, shows us how it can all be done. His eyes sparkled with eloquence, while his hands were full of business. He preached Jesus, crowning the truth with his testimony. Yet, **Hard**  
how cruel that they should **Work.**  
"gnash on him with their teeth!" His opposers were "cut to the heart." A faith-

ful steward often carries the sting of rebuke to a selfish or sordid soul. The class-leader who reaches the conscience of his careless or worldly member may sometimes expect little short of complaint or stones. Be not discouraged. A shower of stones on your head may mean a shower of blessings on other souls. Your "labor is not in vain in the Lord." The Holy Spirit within the toiler's heart will gild every task with the light of promise. Better the honor of doing common, every-day things, in a divinely wonderful manner, than the glory of working miracles.

There is a reward for such service, though  
**Faithful Service Sure of Reward.** given without salary. Stephen's prayer must have risen loud and strong for the young man who held the clothes of those who stoned him. When a little later we read of Saul's con-



version, and of the conscience-sting from the memory of this event, we are forced to conclude that the dying prayer of Stephen produced the apostle to the Gentiles.

Again, we read that on the death of Stephen arose "a great persecution against the Church," and "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." Philip had a sweeping revival in Samaria. The Ethiopian convert carried in his chariot a flaming heart into Africa; and thus gospel firebrands were scattered by the dying hand of Stephen over all Asia Minor and Egypt. His official career lasted but a few months, but who will say he wrought in vain? He taught the Christian world how to pre-  
**Stephen's  
Triumph.**  
 pare for disputes, and how to do business for God. From him we learn how to forgive our foes, and how to beget our succes-

## 54      OUR LAY OFFICE-BEARERS.

sors through prayer. In him we see when to witness for Jesus, and how to fall asleep in death. As a weary pilgrim perfumes himself for a pleasant entrance to a banquet hall, he leaves official honors for a martyr's crown. Such glory is not too bright for even a brief term of such model service.

Like honor and usefulness await the official who welcomes office, not for praise or power, but as an opportunity divinely given; who is content to stay in office while he seeks not the monopoly of honor at the expense of coming workmen, and who gladly yields his place to even a weaker successor. If our Government can present a medal with five hundred dollars in gold to each of Dewey's men at Manila, shall not heaven's court applaud and reward the patient and unpaid protectors of the walls of our Zion?

Truly, the inheritance of the Levites is

not abolished; their reward is sure. If they seek not to absorb or usurp authority; if they refuse not counsel; if they betray not their trust, and block not their Lord's chariot; if they esteem not lightly their honor, then shall God exalt the Church at the hand and by the help of her officials. Our office-bearers shall become torch-bearers; and thus, becoming soul-winners, they shall share the glory of the ministry, and become bright crown-wearers in the great and final day.

## VI. THEIR FIELD OF ACTION.

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METHODISM, more than any other religious denomination, furnishes the, fullest opportunity to all her laity. Male and female, young and old, official and private member, may find full scope for the exercise of their grace and gifts. The field of action for each and all is to be found in (1) The Organizations; (2) The Councils; (3) The Enterprises of the Church.

### 1. The Sunday-school.

At the front among the organizations of the Church is the Sunday-school. Its head is the superintendent, though the pastor must ever be recognized as commander-in-chief

of all the organizations within the Church. The Sunday-school is a part of the Church, not independent of it. The su-  
perintendent is nominated by the **The Super-  
intendent.** Sunday-school Board, but confirmed, and virtually elected, by the Quarterly Conference. The superintendent ought to be the pastor's right-hand and best man. He should be a man of high repute, deep piety, and much good sense. He should love the Lord, the child, and the Bible. He should have open eyes, a big heart, and a progressive spirit. The type of character produced in the school depends much on the superintendent. His associate officers and teachers should share his responsibility and harmonize with his plans. The whole Official Board should help bear his burdens. Each official of the Church owes a duty to the Sabbath-school, and by his kindly

thought can make or unmake, help or hinder the superintendent. The type of generosity, intelligence, faith, and loyalty affecting the whole Church is largely begotten in the Sunday-school. The alienation of the Sunday-school from the public congregation is too often traceable to the absence or indifference of the other official members. Cheer, counsel, and support the Sunday-school superintendent and his board of teachers and officers. They need you. You need them.

Nothing is more painful than to see a superintendent of a large Church of sensible and pious adults struggling  
**A Sad Spectacle.** for lack of teachers, sympathy, money, or support. As well try to run a Church without light and fuel. No wonder our children slip from our grasp, or that the Bible slips from them. Every official

ought to pull, push, or scotch the Sunday-school wagon. It may thus become a soul-saving and educational center, second to no other in the Church.

## 2. The Epworth League.

This latest child of our prayers is worthy official patronage. It must have it, or become a premature dwarf or prodigal. The young people must not be wholly separated from the old, nor should the young blood in the Epworth League of the Church be excluded from the official roster. The president of the League is confirmed, and practically appointed and indorsed, by the Quarterly Conference. Every official, therefore, owes this organization something of support and cheer. The occasional or frequent presence of official members would do much to prevent isolation, independence, or de-

cline. The president and his cabinet bear great responsibility. They have a splendid chance to utilize and mold an influential crowd for Christ. The president is a member of the Quarterly Conference by approval, and can easily enlist these brethren and sisters in the League. They in turn can speak a good word, inquire often of its welfare, congratulate or suggest, visit and pray for, and thus forge a bond of union which will prove a permanent blessing to the whole Church.

### 3. The Class-Meeting.

Often regarded as an organization of convenience for a few persons of pious temper-

**A Place**      **ament,** it ought to be looked upon  
**for All**  
**Officials.**      **as a reserve dynamo of power.**

Whenever recognized at all, its existence should be supported as a valuable and vital



phase of Methodist life. Reports of class-leaders and respectful comment and encouragement is the duty of every office-bearer. What if each officer of the Church would adopt a rule of visiting class-meetings and other organizations of his Church at regular intervals, showing sympathy for, and comforting fellow burden-bearers! What spirit and life would come to the whole body! A new era would dawn, and all would be happy and hopeful. We smother some fires, and put others out by neglecting them. Carry a little kindling-wood with you, please, and help keep up the flame of godly zeal.

#### 4. The Ladies' Aid Society.

In many Churches this society is doing a good work. Though not officially recognized, they are socially and financially relied on, and might be made a spiritual

feeder of many if properly encouraged. Give the faithful sisters credit for all their **Help** efforts and enterprise. Many **Those** women at ease can do something **Women.** useful through this society that will prepare the way for more spiritual action.

### 5. Missionary Societies.

There is the Woman's Foreign and the Woman's Home Missionary Societies, as well **Missionary** as Deaconess Bands, Guilds, etc., **Zeal.** all of which offer a chance to every woman of the Church to labor and learn of our connectional work. The officers of these societies should occasionally be invited to the Official Board meetings to report their work. Their burdens might thus be lightened, and their sphere greatly enlarged, to the advantage of all and the detriment of none. Every woman of the Church

could do some special work. If each official brother should become an honorary member of the women's societies, closer fellowship would soon insure a larger intelligence and co-operation in every department of Church life.

What is said above may be justly emphasized with reference to the officers of the Junior League, Brotherhoods, Reading Circles, Praying Bands, and every legitimate organization of the people. If at all worthy of existence and pastoral indorsement, these societies and their officers are worthy of support. If any becomes superfluous, let it be officially dispensed with in a kindly manner, until some other phase of activity be substituted.

The regular councils of the Church furnish the leading field for official operation and service.

### 1. Leaders and Stewards' Meeting.

The Discipline gives this original and smaller council of Methodism a place of importance. In many cases it is not supplanted by the Official Board. It inquires after the sick, the needy, the disorderly, the negligent, the probationers, changes in the classes, candidates for license to preach, and pastoral support. The leaders and stewards have much to do in revising the membership list and inaugurating reforms touching the religious tone of the Church. This cabinet

**A Very** of counselors is vital to the pas-  
**Important** tor in all his spiritual plans.  
**Council.**

Regular meetings afford excellent opportunity to get acquainted with the real spiritual condition of the Church membership. This meeting may be a department of health, of mercy and help, or of spiritual

life and progress. Its recommendations to the Quarterly Conference or Official Board would have great weight. Every steward and leader should prize his opportunity and stand vigorously by every call to such councils with the pastor.

## 2. Official Board Meetings.

It is the permanent council of the pastor in permanent session, though under regular or special call. It should be held once a month. The planning of religious, financial, or social enterprises, improvements, methods of work, are all of essential importance to every pastoral charge. This can best be accomplished in the Official Board, including all the trustees, stewards, leaders, local preachers, exhorters, Sunday-school superintendents, and League presidents. All these may find a supreme op-

portunity in these meetings to serve God and promote Christ's kingdom. The trustee should second the steward, and the steward should support the trustee. The care of property and the salvation of souls are closely related, as the frame and picture depend on each other.

### 3. The Quarterly Conference.

This is the official review hour when presiding elder, pastor, and all officials meet and report the whole work. Men and women are alike admitted, and should gladly accept a place in this council. With the presiding elder as chairman, and a voice and vote from every member, including the pastor, no more representative or conservative body could be wished for to forward the interests of the Church. Here originate and are determined all licenses to preach, all

delegates to District and to Annual Conferences. Without previous action of the Quarterly Conference there could be no District, Annual, Judicial, Lay Electoral, or even General Conference. It is the deciding body of Methodism, and calls for the wisdom, faith, and prayerful help of each and every office-bearer in the Church. It is **The Official Candlestick.** the candlestick where his official light is set to shine. A severe providence only should justify absence from this meeting. "Men who hold official position in the Church who do not regularly attend, or send some sufficient excuse, are unworthy of their trust. Ordinary business is no such excuse; the Church might better hire some one to do this private business than to have her work suffer from neglect."\*

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\*Dryer's Manual for Church Officers.

What is here said of the Quarterly Conference might be as truly affirmed of the District and Lay Electoral Conferences, and all the privileges thereof. It is a great honor, and no less a great responsibility and gracious providence for doing good and crystallizing reform.

The layman has come to share honors, as well as governmental and financial burdens, **Priest and Levite at the Front.** with the ministry. With this equal representation and honor comes equal call to piety, devotion, promptness, and fidelity. This reaches from the class-leaders, League presidents, and Sunday-school teacher's chair to the layman's seat in General Conference. The priest and the Levite shall bear the ark of the Lord to a sure resting place while the multitude invariably follow with shouts of victory.

The unorganized enterprises and activities



of the Church call as loudly for support and promotion as the more formal meetings and machinery of the kingdom. Whether it be the picnic, the social gathering, the parliamentary debate, the revival, the prayer-meeting, the convention, the institute, or the lecture course, there is both a claim and a call to every official soul in Jesus' name to enter the fight and share the burdens of the army of the Lord. Trustees and missionary officers are as much needed and demanded in the altar service of the revival meeting as in the pew of the public congregation, or the official seat in Quarterly Conferences. Whatever God indorses by his Spirit and providence, whatever helps souls to Christ and usefulness, there the office-bearer may safely be found. Whatever God honors by the seal of his Spirit we should indorse by our influence.

**All Activities Ours.**

For reasons in no way reflecting upon the incumbent of Church offices, the honors of office are often lifted from one shoulder and placed upon another. Nothing is more unfortunate than to show temper or indifference after being removed or dropped out of official station. He who is sensible and conscientious will keep steadfast in

**Faithful In** his private harness and prove  
**Harness**  
**or Out.**

himself faithful for Christ's sake rather than for the sake of the honors of men. "How can ye believe who receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

## VI. THE OFFICIAL AND HIS PRESIDING ELDER.

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IF there is one office in Methodism in danger of being discounted by our own laity it is the presiding eldership.

There are special reasons for this peril. Other Churches have long magnified episcopal supervision. Being few and far separated from the laymen, costing little and being surrounded with a glamour of greatness, and often advertised by the secular press, bishops are popular enough with all classes. The pastorate is recognized as a necessity. Universal custom of the Churches demands its support, both for religious and local reasons. The pastor comes close to

the people, and forms attachments personal and ecclesiastical which anchor him as a

**The** minister in the community. **Office.** The presiding elder is an official not widely adopted in the economy of other denominations. He is too common to be venerated, too far removed from the families to be personally attached to them, though important enough to be censured for his administration, which often involves the reformation of customs, or conflict of opinions that prepare the way for complaint—especially among cold, disloyal, or uninformed members.

The office itself is the hub of the itinerant wheel. It is the presiding elder—**Related to the itinerancy.** ship that makes the itinerancy an easy possibility. Without the former the latter would fail, or prove most ineffective. This subbishopric is as vital in our

Methodist economy as the corresponding under-generalship of the army, and worth proportionately more to the Church. In an accommodated, but not greatly strained sense, the words of Paul to Timothy may be spoken to our young people, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they that labor in the Word and doctrine." (1 Tim. v. 17.)

The value of the presiding elder may be estimated under four heads: 1.

Supervision; 2. Responsibility; **Value.**  
3. Counsel; 4. Service.

1. He must supervise, rather than operate. This is a kind of service not always appreciated by the individual, but of rarest worth in every corporation and institution of religious, civil, or business circles. The presiding elder must execute the order of

our Discipline. This involves both the moral condition and habits of pastors and membership. The maintenance of the dignity of order, and the prosecution of the various lines of work so essential in a great and growing Church, require much private correspondence and office work, as well as regular formal inquiries in Quarterly and

**His** District Conference sessions. He  
**Super-** is a supervisor, not only of the  
**vision.** Discipline, but of the finances. He is to supplement feeble methods of finance, both as regards pastoral claims and support, and stimulate methods for the success of our connectional work, including various benevolences involving the interests of the Church in the ends of the earth. Especially is his financial judgment and spiritual enthusiasm needed to conserve and promote our rural work, which is the great feeder of all our

Churches, and the majority element in all our Conferences.

2. His consequent responsibility can only be borne to be fully understood. He must decide legal questions of far-reaching import. He must direct trials when necessary, and prevent them when possible. He is both a judge and counselor at law in ecclesiastical circles. Disputes and controversies, as to private property and pastoral interests, are often submitted to his decision in the absence of a bishop. He must sometimes assume authority involving destiny and the pain or promotion of preachers and officials. His responsibility, as to the location of churches, titles, insurance, debts, investments, bequests, etc., are frequent burdens unknown and unfelt except by himself. To faithfully rebuke the erring, warn the careless,

**His  
Respon-  
sibility.**

correct the blundering, and duly approve and reward the worthy, is certainly the source of perplexity and cares without number. Higher authority and General Conference officers have their eyes on him, and are ready to call him to account for marked failure, in either administration or financial results.

3. His counsels are sought by many, even from among many who talk of the eldership as the needless "fifth wheel" of our ecclesiastical wagon. Pastors advise with him, and open their hearts, or ought to do so. He is your preacher's pastor. He must help the laity by the cheer, advice, and inspiration to study, success and fidelity, which he may impart to the pulpit and the parsonage. Young preachers, many of them, get their start and stamp more from their presiding elder than from their col-



lege or seminary professor. If he is strong, spiritual, helpful, and wise, he becomes to his preachers both a library and a school. What is true of his valuable  
His  
 counsels to pastors, old and **Counsels.**  
 young, as to their habits, faith, and efficiency, is true in his relation to the influential laymen of the Church who constitute his congress and cabinet. Their counsel with him and his interest in them should, for the Church's sake, be frank and unfeigned. He mediates between the congregation and the pulpit. He counsels officials, and receives their advice. The bishop knows little except what comes to him through the presiding elder. Appointments to most of the Churches are made through the presiding elders, and this makes their service perpetual in its influence and of vital import to every layman and family in Methodism.

4. Much of the above is unseen and unappreciated work of the most important nature. But if actual service is alone to be reckoned, then it is worth remembering that the average presiding elder preaches more sermons than the average pastor, two to one. He presides in Quarterly and other Conferences and conventions many times each month. He administers sacraments, both of the Lord's Supper and often of baptism, in many Churches of all grades. He is supposed to give extra service when asked, never refuse a special public address, travel almost daily, by all methods and in all exposures of weather, sleep in all atmospheres, entertain and be entertained by all classes of people, and never flag or fail to be untiring, enthusiastic, great, and equal to any emergency. All this reveals not the sacred agonies of his Conference Gethsemane,

where, during cabinet sessions, he must crystallize his counsels and boil down his facts into far-reaching decisions on behalf of pastors beloved and people clamorous, until his sensitive soul, if it be not seared, is glad to cry out at the close of each annual session, "It is finished." In doing so he sweats, and sometimes nearly dies, little knowing whether the jibe of "Crucify him" or the music of "Crown him" shall next fall on his ears.

A slight study of the value of a presiding elder's work ought to enlist,—

1. Sympathy for Him and His Office.—He needs and deserves kindly help and confidence rather than cool censure. **Deserves Sympathy.** He has a most difficult field of labor. Of course, he may prove careless, perfunctory, and heartless; but that is not the average result, and is the exception

rather than the rule. The standard should be raised, and the best results demanded. But a kindly compliment from pastor or official will do him good. Special mention of him in prayer or a kindly letter of approval would not miscarry or lose its reward.

2. A Cheerful Support.—The presiding elder's claim, as well as that of bishop, should be cheerfully and un-  
**Support.** grudgingly paid. It is all earned.

Look at the officer's pay in the army, in an insurance company, or in any secular institution. Compare it with clerk hire, and you will see that for services rendered of superintendence and care, not one of them is overpaid as to quality or quantity of service given. It will pay every official to increase rather than discount the salary of these generals of our Church army. Those prosper most who honor their superior officers.

3. Loyalty and Protection.—They should have this for the Church's sake. It will strengthen the efficiency of every suborganization in the Church. **Loyalty.**

It will make better officials and more useful members. It will create and maintain an *esprit de corps* of inestimable value. It will oil every part of the machine, destroy friction and fix an anti-rattler on every pinion and axle. Loyalty is the fruit of love and the voice of Providence. It is good citizenship in the kingdom. Loyalty to the providence of a God-honored office will lead to both piety and prosperity. To please and defend your presiding elder is never wasted enterprise.

4. Co-operation. — Optional response to orders in any business or civil organization would ruin the firm. Disregard the orders of a superior officer and you work the

foundation of disaster. The presiding elder ought not to have to command anything,

**Give Him**

**Co-oper-**

**ation.**

certainly not threaten. His hint or counsel should have the weight of an order. Harmony and response to a defective plan will bring larger results than independent movements by different Churches. A pastoral charge will soon take on the character indicated by the plans seconded by the support of the officials of that charge; and thus a district will become conspicuous for revival, educational or financial prosperity in proportion as published plans are seconded by the preachers and laity, especially the latter. To arrange appointments, removals, etc., without thoroughly advising with the presiding elder is Methodist folly of a high order. If you trust his official judgment, he will respect yours. Open and frank conference as to appointments by

all concerned will honor our Discipline, and prepare the way for submission to authority as well, or for the speedy correction of blunders. Congregationalism is the rending of the robes of our superior officers; it is the weakening of our system, and the beginning of the end. It is the carving of Ichabod's image on the walls of Methodism.

## VIII. GENERAL HINTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

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THE official who will not pay a minister he dislikes, should not dictate the appointment of one he hopes may suit him. A balky official, like a kicking horse, is costly at any price.

A most foolish custom is to pay a preacher in sauce and receipts. Especially is it disgraceful to charge a country pastor excessive price for produce after mixing it up with some paltry donation.

No officer should complain if new blood is added to the Board by the election of un-



tried, but promising, young people. A clannish club of officials who seek to hold Church business in the hands of **New Blood** a select few, or in the ruts of **In the Board.** faulty precedents, are a weight to any Church. New men and women ought to be introduced and trained for coming years.

Save us from the faint-hearted collector who seems ashamed of his business. He hurries from pew to pew, almost **Faint-Hearted Collectors.** with a look of apology, afraid to pass the collection plate or basket before the people lest he insult them. He expects nothing, and gets little. Be brave; you are revenue collectors for the King. Be deliberate. Look cheerful and confident. Give everybody a chance.

Poor financiering is worse than poverty. One or two good stewards, who are friends

of system and progress, are worth a silver mine to any Church. They insure success. Borrowing money of your preacher, and

**Perform** charging him up with the same  
**Duty or**  
**Resign.** on salary, is the lowest type of depravity. Every official, who accepts election or appointment, should serve in his place, report to his committee or Conference when called, or honorably resign his office. Every Church, in country and city, should have regular ushers, male or female, who shall act on the Welcome Committee.

Procrastination is the thief of time and money. Early plans and early work always  
**Prompt** win. Neglect is a cousin to  
**Service.** robbery. The ministers are responsible for the type of officials in the Church. Welcome the young official who is always on hand; who votes squarely; who

reports promptly; and who does his best without an everlasting apology.

A respectable communion set, with neat linen, is evidence of good official taste and enterprise. Unleavened bread **Communion Ware.** and unfermented wine are also orthodox requirements, and evidence the sound Methodist sense of all concerned.

All members of the Church, in good standing, should commune regularly. An unsatisfactory or broken record **Who Should Commune.** ought not to bar the soul from a renewal of life. Sincere heart-searching and penitence will mend the past, and render the soul acceptable and the service pleasing to Jesus and his Church. It is a break-water against temptation.

It is an act of irreverence to take the communion with a gloved hand. The rea-

son is manifest. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we come near, by covenant

**Reverence** and faith, to the Lord Jesus.

**at the  
Table.**

Every sense of propriety requires our removal of every hindrance between the soul and Savior. The courtesy of friendship and humility alike commend this custom of early communicants, and render the hint of our Discipline more than a mere suggestion. It should be a uniform custom. A little forethought would add beauty and value to our communion services.

If a professor of grace fails to confess, in a formal way, on communion occasions, he

**Cause** opens the way for neglect at

**for**

**Alarm.**

other private and public points of duty. It ought to be, and is, a real occasion of alarm when members of the Church decline to confess Christ at the sac-

ramental table. It is often the opening of the door to further backsliding and worldliness. Duty performed may quickly heal the breach, shut the door against danger, and restore the joys of salvation.

Porter, in his "Helps to Official Members," gives the following timely advice to trustees and stewards. **Good Advice to Officials.**

It deserves a wide reading:

"Half of the children and youth belong to poor families, and have little acquaintance with Church officers. If noticed at all by them, it is often in the way of complaint. Trustees and other functionaries should give them special attention. . . . If our trustees would take this course, we should have fewer empty Churches. People don't like to go to Church to be reminded, by the inattention of trustees, that

they are not wanted. A warm recognition from this source would lead tens of thousands to the Church who have no place among us.

“Stewards should be heroic. It is important, though not, perhaps, surprising, that they sometimes get in the way of complaining, pleading poverty, and preaching unbelief, thinking probably that it will improve the collections. But this is a miserable way of begging. We never new a Church to thrive on official whining. They are always prophesying evil. Pious worrying is chronic with them. But this will not do for stewards. They must keep sunny and hopeful, have faith in God for all reasonable attainments. Heroism is inspiring. A close, whining, despondent steward is a curse to any Church, especially if he is rich.”

**Recipes for Communion Bread.**

1. One pint of flour; one teaspoonful of baking-powder; two teaspoonfuls of pulverized sugar; one tablespoonful of butter. Mix with water. Roll dough, and cut into strips with a floured knife. Lay strips in pan so they will not touch. Bake in a moderate oven.

**Communion Bread  
Recipes.**

2. Take one pint of sweet milk; four tablespoonfuls of sweet cream (or two of nice fresh lard when cream can not be obtained); half a teaspoonful of cream of tartar; a fourth of a teaspoonful of soda. Knead in flour till stiff. Roll about three-eighths of an inch thick, cut into strips about the same width, lay these a little distance apart on white paper, lay in baking tins, and bake carefully. For love-feast, bake in checks about half an inch square.

3. "The whites of four eggs, well beaten; butter about the size of an egg; two table-spoonfuls of water; one teaspoonful of baking-powder; a little pinch of salt. Make the dough a little stiffer than pie-dough, and beat well with rolling-pin. Roll not so thin as pie-crust. Stick it full of holes with fork, to prevent blistering. Cut in strips six to eight inches in length, and about one-half inch wide; bake in slow oven in pan slightly greased."

Let the communion and love-feast table be prepared early. Whether in city or **Preparing** rural Churches, the steward, or **the** **Table.** person in charge of the communion wine and bread, should have the table in good and complete condition at the opening of the public service. It is an offense to propriety and good order to interrupt the service and the worshipers assembled by



pouring wine, spreading linen, handling pitchers, bottles, etc., in presence of the people. This blunder usually occurs to suit the convenience of the person in charge. The pastor should make careful inquiry beforehand to see that there is no misunderstanding, and that everything be done decently and in order. We have known a little neglect to spoil a whole communion service. Bungling or belated preparations, fermented wine instead of unfermented juice of the grape, blocks of leavened bread instead of suitable communion bread, uncleaned glasses or goblets, inadequate linen spread over a colored stand cover in the altar—all these, and similar offenses, might be averted by a little forethought and conversation with the steward in charge, or in the official meeting.

Love-feast bread may be leavened, and should be cut in small blocks, and on separate plates. Never should it be passed on the communion plates. Separate goblets, either silver or glass, should be used in passing the water in a love-feast service. The custom of passing water in a bowl is primitive, and is quite in good taste, because significant of a common family fellowship, and union of interests. In wait-

**Serving** ing on the congregation in love-  
**the**  
**People.** feasts it is in best taste to wait first upon the pews, the stewards or their substitutes being named by the pastor, and they returning and being seated at the front until all have finished, when ministers and officials should eat together, serving one another, and adjourning to their respective seats in good order. The return to the pews, to accommodate certain late comer

with the bread and water, is disorderly, and should be discouraged. A premium should be placed upon promptness. Avoid all needless embarrassment or distraction.

Approaching the communion table calls for thought and discretion. Otherwise confusion and irreverence may result. There are two extremes— **Approach-  
ing the  
Table.** one is precipitant rush; and the other, prolonged delay. As this sacrament assumes that all members of the Church family are on equality, and God is no respecter of persons, no one should unduly hesitate. Naturally enough, and with good show of courtesy, older members are expected first to respond to the invitation. A prompt response, sufficient to comfortably fill the first table, is a symptom of good spiritual life and loyalty. But crowding about the

table, in double rows of kneeling communicants, in apparent haste and embarrassment, is in bad taste, and exceedingly inconvenient, as well as irreverent. Better wait, though for a time it be necessary to remain standing in the aisle.

A custom in vogue in some localities is worthy of study, and has certain advantages to commend it, especially in larger congregations. Omitting the words of dismissal, whereby communicants of each table are made to depart at one time, the organ voluntary is maintained during the entire communion. After the consecration of the elements, and the first filling of the altar, each individual communicant rises when served with the bread and wine, and retires voluntarily to his pew. In turn, another quietly kneels in his place, and the minister passes along the altar, quietly, or with accustomed

words, administering the sacrament. This plan avoids confusion, abbreviates the service, and often contributes to the spirit of devotion. With emphatic explanation that all probationers, baptized children, and members of other Christian Churches are equally privileged by our Church in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, this occasion may be made a most refreshing and profitable means of grace.

Every official of the Church should read the late edition of his Discipline each year, especially Parts I to VII. In addition to this he should own **Read the Discipline Often.** and read Neely's "Parliamentarian," and become familiar with the simpler rules of order common to parliamentary debate and in deliberate assemblies.

**Course of Study for Class-Leaders.**

Discipline.

The Catechism, No. 3.

Episcopal Address to Class-leaders.

The Class-leader.—*Atkinson*.

The Class-meeting.—*Fitzgerald*.

The Why of Methodism.—*Dorchester*.

Manual for Church Officers.—*Dryer*.

Plain Account of Christian Perfection.—*Wesley*.

Doctrinal Aspects of Christian Experience.—*Merrill*.

Father Reeves.

Memoir of Carvosso.

Hand-book of Christian Theology.—*Field*.

Seed Thought.—*Robinson*.

Scripture History.—*Smith* (abridged).

Outline of Church History.—*Hurst*.

History of Methodism.—*Stevens* (abridged.)

**Books of Reference.**

Hand-book of Bible Geography.—*Whitney*.

Hand-book of Bible Manners and Customs.—*Freeman*.

Hand-book of Bible Biography.—*Barnes*.









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